

*The Dangerous Rule:*  
OR,  
**A SERMON**  
Preached at *Clonmel* in  
the Province of *Mun-*  
*ster* in *Ireland*,  
Upon *Aug. 3. 1657.*  
Before  
The Reverend Judges  
for that Circuit.

---

By *S. L.* Master in Arts, and lately  
Fellow of *C. C. C.* in *Oxon.*

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*Nóμος τὸ πάντα γίγνεται καὶ κείνεται.*

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against the Conduit in *Corn-hill*, 1658.

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To the Right Honourable  
*Richard Pepys,*

Lord Chief Justice of the  
Upper Bench, & Counsel-  
lor of State in *Ireland.*

And

*John Byssé, Esq;*

Recorder of the  
City of *Dublin;*

Judges of Assize,  
For the Province  
of *Munster.*

My Lords,

**I** *N* Obedience  
to your Lord-  
A ships

## The Epistle

ships, I do here  
present you with a  
Copy of that Dis-  
course which was  
so lately preached  
before you. I dare  
not quarrel with it  
now, lest that  
should implicitly  
Question your  
Lordships Judge-  
ments, and the  
Judgements of se-  
veral



## Dedictory.

veral other persons  
of Quality, who  
have been pleas'd  
to approve of it:  
Yet this I must say,  
That I was so far  
from thinking it  
might become the  
Press; as that  
in such an Audito-  
ry, and upon so so-  
lemn an occasion,  
I judg'd it unwor-  
A 2 thy

## The Epistle

*thy of the Pulpit.*  
But since your  
Lordships have  
thought otherwise,  
& because it scarce  
favours of good  
manners to contra-  
dict either your  
Thoughts or Com-  
mands, I have thus  
submitted it to your  
Lordships Plea-  
sures; though I am

## Dedictory.

it. not altogether in-  
ur sensible what sun-  
dry prejudices will  
attend it. 'Tis  
e, suited to a particu-  
ce lar Season, and  
od therefore, like mu-  
ca- sical notes, harmo-  
ur nious in their due  
m- time and place, but  
bus nothing less when  
our dis-joyned from  
ea these: nor dare I  
am  
not

A 3 wish

## The Epistle

wish, that it might  
again become fa-  
shionable, since that  
were to imprecate  
publick mischiefs.  
'Twill be distasted  
by some, because it  
seems to derogate  
from the deserved  
worth of a good  
Conscience; though  
its Author was so  
far from this, that  
he

## Dedictory.

he could more gladly have pleaded against Laws without this Balance, then against Conscience without their Conduct: only men were leaning rather towards the later extreme; and if he seems to bend a crooked Tree too much on the con-

## The Epistle

*trary hand, his intent is no other but to make it straight in the close. 'T will be censured by others, for preferring Achitophel before David; for advancing carnal Reason too highly, & too much slighting the assistance of Gods Spirit: but this*  
*was*

## De dicatory.

*was as far from my  
thoughts, as to  
speak of it, had been  
besides my purpose.  
That the Lord doth  
thus eminently help  
those, who by pray-  
er and faith, wait  
upon him, is a most  
comfortable and  
precious truth: yet  
I humbly conceive,  
that such assistance*

*A 5 can*

## The Epistle

*can be expected only in those Undertakings, to which God calls men, not to which they call themselves: And then too, in the diligent use, not in the slothful & supercilious neglect of lawful means: for this lesson the Creator hath taught*



## Dedicatory.

us by his own practice: If Omnipotency design the restoration of a languishing Hezekiah, or his sight <sup>Isa. 38.</sup> <sup>21.</sup> Joh. 9.6. who was born blind; a lump of figs, clay, & spittle must be applied: And as diseases in the natural body are not curable without

## The Epistle

*without Physick; so  
neither those in the  
Politick without  
Laws. Nor have I  
pleaded for what's  
amiss in these: 'tis  
true, I have com-  
pared them to the  
sweetest Musick;  
and do, I confess,  
judge known  
Laws the beauty  
and harmony of a  
Com-*

## Dedictory.

*Commonwealth; yet  
if this Harp be out  
of tune, or want a  
string, let some  
skilful ear, and  
cautious hand be  
intrusted with its  
Reformation. But  
to vote Law's re-  
dundant and un-  
necessary, as too  
many have done;  
to break these  
bands*

## The Epistle

bands in sunder,  
& cast these silken  
Cords of Reason  
from us, were to  
antidate Divine  
vengeance in one of  
its most terrible  
threatnings; even  
with our own hands  
to stretch out upon  
these Nations the  
line of confusion,  
and the stones of  
em.

## Dedictory.

emptiness. This Discourse is yet subject to a farther disadvantage; twil fall, no doubt, into the hands of many, whom obscurity or non-observation of our late Exorbitancys, may render strangers to its just ground and plentiful occasion; though  
this

## The Epistle

*this was not only  
the over-jealous  
surmises of some,  
nor the discontent-  
ed and secret mut-  
terings of others ;  
but things visibly  
acting both in our  
Native Country,  
and here : Nor  
could the utmost  
care of our Honor-  
able and pious Go-  
ver-*

## Dedicatory.

vernors (their Excellencies the Lord Deputy Ireton, whose memory is still precious; the Lord Deputy Fleetwood, a person so eminently gracious, that this Age hath scarce parallel'd him; the Lord Henry Cromwel, whom God hath fur-

## The Epistle

furnished with  
wisdom & conduct  
even to admirati-  
on :) I say, the ut-  
most care of these,  
and of those other  
worthies, who were  
still drawing in the  
same yoke with  
them, could not  
suddenly redress  
this: for when once  
a Distemper hath  
seized



## Dedicatory.

*h* seiz'd the blood &  
*Et* vital Spirits, the  
- head may more ea-  
- sily condole then  
cure it. And

*r* really we, in this  
*e* flegmatick climate,  
*e* grew strangely in-  
*o* fected with that  
*r* State-malady, this  
following Sermon  
declares against:  
some Persons of  
very

## The Epistle

*very considerable  
Quality, were not  
asham'd to tell you,  
that they expected  
ere long to carry  
all the Law of  
England in their  
pockets. Nor  
were these esteem'd  
such Lovers of  
Books, as to make  
that Pocket-Com-  
panion very bulkish  
nei-*

## Dedicatory.

neither. I cannot but smile, (and the Lord grant it may be with a thankful heart) when I call to mind how neatly we were courted by the smooth and still voice of plausibility, into a consent to our own ruine. And that design goes on most dan-

## The Epistle

*dangerously, which  
makes least noise :  
for the screaming  
wheel is more in-  
terrupted then the  
silent. But I must  
humbly crave your  
Lordships pardon  
for this tedious di-  
version from your  
more serious Em-  
ployments ; and I  
shall here break it  
off,*

## Dedictory.

off, the rather because 'tis no less then a publick Injury. That the weighty Undertakings now recommended to your care, may be managed in the fear of that God, before whose more dreadful Tribunal your selves with the meanest

The Epistle, &c.  
meanest of those  
whom you are now  
to sentence, must  
ere long appear;  
shall be his earnest  
request at the  
Throne of Grace,  
who is,

From my  
Study in  
Clonmel,  
August 3.  
1657.

Your Lord-  
ships most  
unworthy  
Servant,

Sam. Ladyman.



# The EPISTLE to the READER.

*Courteous Reader,*

**T**His ensuing Discourse  
is adapted to the tem-  
per of the times, & smartly  
militates against the wild-  
ness of irregular Decisions  
a and

## *To the Reader.*

and Determinations ; and was therefore deservedly courted to come forth, and appear upon a publick Stage : that so in it , as in a Glass, the World might behold the Monstrosity, & rugged deformity of Conscience, when seated upon the Throne, as Queen Regent ; whilst standing Laws are constrain'd to lie gasping under her Imperious Feet , and are sullied unto the reproach of useless and absurd.

The



## *To the Reader.*

The declared Design is to make Conscience a Court of Chancery, to mitigate the rigour of the Laws, as if they were a Torrid Zone, under which there were no living. The following Hints and Observations, are in order to thy satisfaction.

I There are many in the World, who appearing before the Bar of Conscience, have gone away complaining, that her little Finger hath lain heavier

## *To the Reader.*

on them, then the dreaded  
**Loins of the Law.** None  
have been more miserably  
hampered, perplexed, and  
injuriously oppressed, then  
such, who (if we would  
be so simple as to believe  
some men) have been most  
conscionably dealt withal.

2 They who are against  
**Law**, are usually such as  
are ignorant of the Laws,  
and understand not the  
**Profundity and Equity** of  
them ; and how they are  
with much mysterious  
wisdom

## *To the Reader.*

wisdom, contrived and accommodated to the state and condition of the people, whose obedience to them is exacted.

3 They who would lay aside the use of Humane Laws, are usually such as speak undervaluingly of the Law of God, and reject it as a Rule.

4 They who would have their own Consciences Judges in other mens matters, will hardly be persuaded to run the hazard

## *To the Reader.*

of standing to the Verdict  
of another Man's Conscience, especially if the Law  
be for him.

5 Conscience is wont  
to favour the Cause of such  
as are of corresponding  
Principles. Sameness of  
Opinion often turns the  
Scales. How often hath  
a dissent in Judgement,  
though mixed with abundance  
of tenderness, made  
men dance attendance, for  
a just Dispatch? which  
great Inconveniency had  
been

## *To the Reader.*

been prevented, if prescribed Rules had been observed.

6 It's observable, that many who are invested with a Military Capacity, are no great Friends to the Laws of the Land. A Justice of Peace is looked upon with an evil Eye, by a Man of War. Colleges are accounted dangerous Citadels, which must therefore be assaulted; and Courts of Justice, strong Holds, possessed by  
men

## *To the Reader.*

men of dangerous imposing Principles, which must therefore be demolished. Books and Records are the Enemies Ammunition, which must be seized on, that to the Adverse Party may be weakned. Laws have been so accustomed to deep silence in times of War and publick Contest, that Men cannot endure they should ever after be heard to speak out, and declare their Mind freely.

7 Where

## *To the Reader.*

7 Where Conscience bears the sway in the Commonwealth, it would likewise be Supreme in the Church ; abhorring all Forms and obliging Rules, but its own: and what hath been the Product of this, let our present Confusions testify. Liberty in Opinion, will quickly resolve into a Liberty in Practice. Thus are Men's Souls destroyed, under pretence of preserving their just Liberties from being invaded

8 Their

## *To the Reader.*

8 Their acquaintance with *Ireland* is but very slender, who have not known it a place abounding with Civil as well as Sacred Antinomians. How refreshing is that Wind to the disconsolate Inhabitants of a weary Land, which frowningly blows in the Faces of such as have approved themselves to be keen Enemies to *Ireland's* Peace and Settlement ? so that Law as well as Religion, begins



## *To the Reader.*

to lift up the Head out of a Deluge and Inundation of boisterous Discouragements, with which it was overwhelmed; which is unto us as a Resurrection from the Dead, and as Light breaking forth out of Obscurity.

This small Treatise hath in it much reason; which, if attended, may serve to convince Gain-sayers, and confirm the Orthodox: to which, that it may do, is

*To the Reader.*

is the Prayer of him,  
who is a Friend to the  
Laws both of God and  
Man,

*J. E.*



**A**



**A S E R M O N**  
 preached at *Clon-*  
*mel in Ireland.*

---

2 S A M. 19.29.

*I have said, Thou and  
 Ziba divide the land.*



**A** *Here the word of  
 a king is, there  
 is power. If Da-*  
*vid said it, who durst*

**B** con-

contradict it ? The Son's Precept, *Eccles. 8. 4.* was but a Transcript of the Father's Practice : though the Verdict he here passed be ever so unreasonable, yet may not *Mephibosheth* say unto him, *What dost thou ?*

I know there are some learned and worthy Authors, (as you may read in their Comments upon this Scripture) who would have this Text to speak no more, then *David's* ratifying his former princely Act of Grace and free Donation, recorded,

corded, *chap. 9. 9, 10.*  
But we must beg  
leave at present to dis-  
sent from these, and to  
side with such as differ  
from them; the rather,  
because the *Context*  
seems to warrant our  
so doing.

I did lately in this  
place, and upon the  
like occasion, lay  
down the *Nature*,  
*Bounds*, and *End of an*  
*Oath*: and as the Sub-  
ject of that Discourse,  
did principally con-  
cern *the Witnesses*; so  
shall this, *the Judge*.

In the words now  
read unto you, there  
B 2 are

*A Sermon preached*  
are these Branches.

1. *A Controversie decided betwixt Ziba and Mephibosheth.*

2. *The matter both of this Decision and Controversie ; the Life, good Name, and whole Estate of Mephibosheth : for had the Treason Ziba charg'd him with, been made good ; he had forfeited all.*

3. *The Judge, and 'twas David, a wise and holy Man, one after God's own Heart, A8. 13. 22. one deeply engaged, both by Friendship and Covenant, to Jonathan and his Seed,*

I Sam. 20. 15, 42.

4. The *Definitive*, though most unjust *Sentence*, That the Plaintiff and Defendant should part stakes : the Land must be equally divided, betwixt abus'd *Mephibosheth*, and his perfidious Servant.

5. Lastly, A *double Cause* of this untoward Decree : the one appears in open and publick view ; the other lies more close in *David's Bosome*. The latter of these we call, *Proegumena* ; the former, *Procatartica*.

I. The *Causa Pro-*  
B 3 ca-

*catartica*, was Ziba's Treachery, Bribes, and Falshood ; together with his plausible management of those his Calumnies : and probable Slanders, if subtilly order'd, with over-credulous Judges, do very easily pass for Truths.

2 Sam. 16. 3.

2. The *Causa Proe-gumena*, was that Arbitrary, yet lame Rule by which *David* proceeded ; this not being, what it ought to have been, the known Laws of that Commonwealth ; but either his Princely Pleasure



sure, or Private Conscience; for both seem lapp'd up in the Prologue prefixed to his Decision, *why speakest thou any more of thy matters?* thou knowest we have more weighty Affairs now in hand, which would not be thus interrupted: Besides, *I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land;* that is, I have heard, as his Accusation, so thy Defence; and do think it very unconscionable for thee to forfeit all, yet loath am I that *Ziba* should have nothing: wherefore 'twill

*A Sermon preached*

not be amiss to divide the Estate ; however, I am resolv'd to have so, nor will I reverse my Sentence.

Though each Branch of this Text would afford us several pithy Observations , yet we must wave them at present ; and from the Judge, his Sentence, and the Rule by which he proceeded, raise only this Doctrine :

Doct.

*That without the guidance and superintendency of known Laws, the Consciences, even of wise and good men, are but an unsafe Rule in matters of Judicature. Were*

Were the Scripture silent in all other places, yet is this one Example to prove this Doctrine abundantly sufficient. The least *David* could have done in this Case, had the Equity of that known Law, recorded in these words, *Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth*, Deut. 19. 21. had this, I say, been his Control and Guide, he could not have done less, then restored *Mephibosheth* to his whole Estate, and hang'd up *Ziba* for his slanderous Accusation: for since, *Psal. 101. 5.*

if that had been true, the Master had deserv'd to lose his head ; it being false , 'twas but equal that the Servant should forfeit his. And even at this day, among the Turks, the false Witness undergoes that punishment, which the Accused, had the Charge been proved, was liable to suffer.

*Proof* But no longer to insist upon this Example in the Text it self , our Saviour seems to justify the Truth of this Proposition , while he refuses to act by so Arbitrary a Rule, as his  
own

own Will or Conscience : for me thinks we may so understand him, *Luke 12. 13, 14.* *Who made me a Judge or a Divider over you ?* As if he had said, You know I am not entrusted with the management of those Laws, by which Controversies about *Meum & Tuum* ought to be decided ; and to determine these Differences by a Rule so boundless, as mens own private Judgments, is not safe ; nor shall I do it.

I believe there were other *Inducements*, which per-

perswaded Christ to wave, what this importunate Suitor would have put upon him: *Perhaps*, lest intermedling with Temporals, should interrupt that more necessary & spiritual work for which he was sent: *Perhaps*, that he might not cherish the then-almost Epidemical mistake concerning the *Messias*, of his coming a Temporal Prince: Or, *perhaps*, that he might not give his Adversaries an occasion to charge him with an affection of Jurisdiction or Magisterial Power

Power over the People. But as these wise and holy Ends had their Influence upon him, so might that also which we first assign'd.

The last Proof I shall trouble you with at this time, shall be that rash and rigorous Sentence denounc'd against the Samaritans, by *James* and *John*, Luk. 9. 54. how do the Consciences of these men, though Christ's own Disciples, like *Sulphurous Atna*, belch out flames? how gladly could they have transformed

formed that Samaritan Village, into another *Sodom*? yea, what satisfaction to them, for those Clouds which drop'd Fatness upon other places, to rain Fire upon this?

But to draw neerer our own Times, we may remember when Conscience sate as a Queen upon the Supreme Seats of Judicature in this Commonwealth; when she acted without Control, and advanc'd her self above all we called Law: did she not then give sufficient proof  
what



what a dangerous Pilot we were like to find her? In what an insolent and furious manner began she to invade our Rights, both as Christians & as Men? Had her Magisterial Dictates stood, our two standing Ordinances must have fallen; our Laws had now lain buried in that heap of confusion, which had been but the unavoidable consequence of their own subversion; our Teachers had been driven into corners; our Gospel-Sun had been wrap'd up in a  
plenary

plenary Eclipse ; our Eloquent Orators, and Learned Councillors, had been numbered among unnecessaries : in *England*, our Books, our Colledges had been burn'd ; in *Ireland*, drown'd : here a Deluge ; there a Flame, had been their Executioner. Had the Decrees of Conscience stood, our Charity had been as cold as our Zeal was hot ; men not onely straitning their Bowels, and refusing to give ; but widening their Arms with resolution, to take

a-

away what our pious  
Ancestors had bestow-  
ed. Never could *Dio-*  
*nysius* applaud himself  
more in his Sacrilege,  
when he spoil'd *Æscu-*  
*lapius* of his Golden  
Beard, and *Jupiter O-*  
*lympius* of his costly  
Robe ; then we our  
selves in our Religious  
Plunder : the Alms of  
the Sick and Lame, the  
Fatherless and the Wi-  
dow, were by Consci-  
ence voted a well-  
pleasing booty, even  
by some reputed both  
*judicious* and *godly*.

And thus both by  
Scripture and Experi-  
ence,

ence, we have proved  
our Doctrine :

*That without the guidance and superintendency of known Laws, the Consciences, &c.*

The Grounds or Reasons of this Point, are several : I shall demonstrate it by a fivefold Argument.

*Arg. I.* The first is taken from *known Laws*, *what they are*. And why may I not call them the very Heart and Soul of a Commonwealth, the Hinges upon which it turns, and the Basis upon which 'tis built ? These lick'd the Civil Body

Body (which otherwise had been but *Rudis, indigestaq; Moles*, a confused Lump, an heap of Rubbish, a meer Chaos) into that comely shape which now adorns it. A Kingdom without Laws, is rather a Den *Isai. 34. 13.* of Thieves, a Court for Owls, an Habitation for Dragons, a *Isai. 13. 21.* Place much fitter for Satyrs to dance, and for Monsters to hide themselves, then for Men to dwell in. So highly did the *Agathyrsi* prize their Laws, that in *Aristotle's* time, for

for remembrance sake,  
 they sang them ; as o-  
 thers did also before  
 Letters were invented :  
 whence some will have  
 the Rules of Musick  
 called νόμος and doubt-  
 less the ravishing Me-  
 lody of *Orpheus* his  
 Harp , was no other  
 then the harmonious  
 murmur of wholesom  
 Laws , by which he  
 drew Beasts, or Men as  
 rude as they, into  
 Humane Society. "Εγ-  
 γρησθε σωήδιστα νότον νόμου.  
 Known Laws are for  
 the most part , but so  
 many commendable  
 Customes in black and  
 white ;

white ; the Wisdom and Experience of former Ages, bundled up, and transmitted to Posterity : and what a folly to place Conscience, which is but of yesterday , and knows little , in the room of these ? Nor may the narrowness of humane Understandings , the weakness of Mens Judgments , derogate from their just Repute ; for though there be but a little Light in a Glow-worm, a little Heat in a Spark ; yet many of these together, will afford a moderate-

Lu-

Lustre, a convenient Warmth. And suppose there be but a smal pittance, but a single beam of Light, but a spark of Knowledge in a single Intellect ; yet doth not this reflect upon those Laws, which were the Products of Concentricated Beams ; of sundry Sparks laid together, and blown into a Flame : I mean, of many well - informed Consciences and Understandings, united in a glittering Constellation ; and sitting in Council for their Good, who live under their



their Influence : For ,  
what more proper Pe-  
riphrasis , then this of  
a Parliament ? what  
was the Roman Se-  
nate, but such ? Now  
to trample under our  
feet the serious and un-  
byass'd Deliberations  
of these Assemblies ; to  
contemn the twisted  
strength of known  
Laws, those well-com-  
pacted Combinations  
of Conscience and  
Judgment ; and above  
these, to exalt the shal-  
low capacities of single  
men ; were to com-  
plain of going to *Jeru-  
salem* , and to erect  
Calves

Calves at *Bethel* : to call Law, a burthenfom piece of Exuberancy ; to cry against this Political Structure, saying, *Race it, race it, even to the foundation* : what is this but to remove the ancient Land - Mark, plac'd by Prudence and Necessity ? to pluck up the Hedge, and lay all in Common : and then the *Nimrods* of that Age, the mighty Hunters, would divide the Spoil. I never think of this Design, and its Promoters, how handsomely they laboured

to cheat us of our Laws,  
(the only Guardians of  
our Estates and Lives)  
but it mindes me of the  
Wolf in the Fable, who  
advis'd the Sheep to dis-  
miss their Dogs, that he  
at pleasure might de-  
vour them.

If any should here ob- *Object.*  
ject those mischiefs  
which too often have at-  
tended Laws ; that, like  
the Bramble, they tear  
the Fleece, rather than  
shelter the Sheep : that  
they serve onely to per-  
plex poor men ; and are  
themselves wrested by  
the wealthier ; or, as  
Spiders Webs, catch les-  
ser

fer Flyes, while the greater escape :

*Answ.*

We might in part deny this charge. But suppose 'twere true ; There is one Maxime which fully answers it : *Abusum non tollit usum* ; the abuse of a thing, can neither null its use, nor in Justice lessen its credit : for if so, what shall we think of the choicest Blessings, which are abus'd to Gluttony and Drunkenness ? yea, of that Manna, and Food of precious Souls, the Scripture it self, which some wrest to their own and others destruction, *2 Pet. 3. 16.* Be.

Besides, the Evils before alledged, cannot in Equity be charged upon the Rule ; but upon those who so wickedly managed it : and if their actings were so enormous, while they had a just and righteous Law to guide and check them ; how much more irregular would these have been, had they been a Law unto themselves ?

This is the first Argument.

The second is taken *Arg. 2.* from *Conscience*, *what that is* : and under this Head, we have five Reasons :

C 2      for

for we shall by and by shew you, that *Conscience*, even in wise and good men, is, 1. a subordinate; 2. a flexible; 3. a defective; 4. an uncertain; 5. an arbitrary Rule: and each of these are enough to prove it (without the guidance of known Laws) a most dangerous Pilot in matters of Judicature.

*Reas. 1.* Conscience is but a subordinate Rule; 'tis dependent upon, and acted by something above it self: it both hears and sees with the eyes and ears of another faculty: 'tis not a guide

to the Understanding ;  
but the Understanding  
a guide to it : 'tis me-  
thinks the Understand-  
ings Eccho ; it onely  
repeats what that di-  
ctates , and adds to it a  
commanding *fiat*. *Con-*  
*science* is but the reverbe-  
ration of intellectual  
Beams : its actings are  
little other then a chew-  
ing over of that Light  
which it borrows from  
this Fountain. But  
Laws are the more im-  
mediate Products , and  
direct Emanations of  
fundry united and ma-  
ture Judgements. Now  
to draw a Curtain be-  
fore  
C 3

fore some splendid Light ; and to examine matters of weight and intricacy, ( and that matters of Judicature are such, we shall shew anon ; ) by some feeble Glimmerings, and faint Reflections ; what were more imprudent and pernicious ? Philosophers have called the Will, *caca Potentia* ; and without the Understanding, Conscience is but *mera impotentia*. Indeed, there is no such distinct faculty in the reasonable Soul ; though Theology treats of it, yet Philosophy is silent  
con-



concerning it. Its two most proper and principal Operations, *συνειδήσις*, & *νείσις*, what are they, but the *intellectus practicus*, recoyling upon it self? Its *συντήρησις*, what is that, but an applicatory contemplation of those Rules by which it esteems it self obliged to act? Nor can Conscience thus look forward upon its Law, or backward upon it self; unless the Understanding lend it Light: which Truth (besides the present occasion we have for it) doth in some measure detect the ground-

less scrupulosity of this age ; in which we are afraid of compelling Children and Servants, (and with these you may rank the ignorant Natives of this Country) to hear publicly, and learn the Principles of Religion; lest we should force Conscience : as if there could be a *σωείδης*, or *χείρις*, without a *σωτήρις* : an excusing or accusing our selves, without the knowledge of those divine Truths, which must measure our actions: even *Paul* himself must see the Law, before he could see his sin,

*Rom.*

Rom. 7. 7. But this is beyond my purpose.

This is the first Reason drawn from Conscience.

Conscience is a very flexible Rule, 'tis pliable to every passion; 'tis easily tainted with prejudice; 'tis byassed by self-interest: and therefore without Laws a most dangerous guide, &c. *Reas. 2.*

1. Like a broken Bow, every passion is able to make it start aside, and forget its business: *Diis proximus ille quem ratio, non ira, movet.* 'Tis a rare thing to  
C 5      finde

finde that man, whom,  
 not Rashness, but Rea-  
 sons governs. How ea-  
 sily is Conscience by-  
 assed with foolish pity?  
 then which, in a Judge,  
 scarce any thing is more  
 dangerous: both the  
 Truth and sad Effects of  
 this, he that runs may  
 read, in *El*'s carriage to  
 his Sons: his gentle  
 Reproof, how ill did it  
 become their horrid and  
 notorious Practises?  
 how far was it beneath  
 the just rigour of those  
 holy Laws, which they  
 had transgressed? what  
 dishonour brought it to  
 the Name of God?  
 what

*Sam. 2. 23*

*Verf. 17.*

what Judgements upon  
his people ? The vilest  
Miscreants, what En-  
couragement would  
they take in their wick-  
edness, were Conscience  
only to be their Judge ?  
how would base Na-  
tures presume to bribe it  
with their tears ? and  
how apt were it to be so  
dealt with ? I have  
often observed, (and do  
think it is not the least  
Ground of that experi-  
mented Maxim, *Sanguis  
Martyrum est semen Eccle-  
siae*) that Misery will ex-  
tract Compassion to-  
wards our most bloody  
Enemies, our greatest  
Op-

Opposites : nay, the very pains and charge, which, even wicked actions expose men to, were Conscience the Judge, must be looked upon. 'Tis pity *Ziba* should lose his Asses, his Journey, and his Good Will too. Were this the Rule, the cry of Justice against a Thief, an Adulterer, would scarce be heard, amidst the sad and loud Complaints of Wife and Children: but such foolish pity would destroy a Commonwealth: though this Affection be most commendable in others, yet  
is

is it blame-worthy in a Magistrate. But more of this in the Application. And since Envy, Malice, with several other of the Passions, do more violently prosecute their Ends, than this of Pity; what hath been said of it, might with advantage be spoken of them.

2. This flexible Rule, is easily infected with prejudice: while Conscience sits Judge, those have a singular advantage, (if I may use that vulgar saying) who cry Whore first, who are the Plaintiffs. This poor  
*Me-*

*Mephibosheth* knew, to his cost. *David* is so byassed by the Servants precedent Information, that the greatest satisfaction his Master, whom he had slandered, can expect, is to come off with loss: half his Estate he must forfeit; and 'tis well he escapes so. How were that Princes eyes stricken blood-shot with *Ziba's* false Gloss? nor did this prejudice, like Paint upon Church-Windows, only keep out Light; but, as he that looks through a coloured Glass, thinks all Objects of that dye; and



and knows not how to undeceive himself, unless he change his *medium*: so doth *David's* Conscience, being thus tainted, judge *Mephibosheth's* righteous Cause of its own colour. Thus known Laws would not have done: they are not so easily stain'd, but keep their native complexion.

Νόμοι οὐκ ἰδὲν ἀλλ' ὁπίσθους, they are deaf as well as blinde; they scorn to lend an ear to mens secret whisperings; but approve much better of *Solomon's* Rule than *David's* Practice, *Prov.* 18. 17. *He that is first in his*

own

*own cause. seemeth just ; but his neighbour comes and searches him.*

3. This flexible Rule is easily bended by self-Interest. Did those that sit in Judgement lie under only the contralls of Conscience, how readily might they say, The Case is altered, when they perceive it either to concern themselves, or any who could but purchase their Favour? Have you read that story concerning *Judah* and *Tamar*? Gen. 38. and did you observe how suddenly his Judgement varied? self-centriety drew

drew Conscience to two opposite Points in an instant: in the 24 *verse*, he commands her, without farther deliberation, to be burnt. But good men will be partial towards themselves. When he understands by whom she was with childe, though this aggravated her Crime also, (for what before he thought Whoredom, now proved Incest) how easily did this Judge remit the punishment? Were Conscience ever so quick-sighted; (though we shall anon prove its eyes to be but dim) could

could it, like some well-touch'd Needle, point exactly where it ought; yet as Iron would that, so would Gold draw this aside: as the *juxta*-position of the smallest Loadstone would put the Needle into a quivering posture; yea, make it dance the Round, not knowing in what part of the Compass to settle: even just thus is every selfish Respect, apt to deal with Conscience. And how dangerous were it in the midst of a troubled Ocean, to sail by a Weather-cock-Needle? How  
im-

impossible for the most skilful Artist to work exactly by a Leaden-Rule?

This is the second Reason drawn from Conscience.

Conscience is a defective Rule ; 'tis too scant to measure out Justice in its due and full proportion. We have already proved it to be but a reflected Light; and 'tis a known Maxime, *Quod Radii reflexi sint semper imbecilliores*, that reflected Beams are more feeble then direct ones. If with a strong Hand you strike a Ball

against the Floor, visible Experience will shew you, that it makes not its Rebounds with so forcible a motion as it was carried thither. Nay, the Light by which Conscience proceeds in its work, is but a Reflexion of a Reflexion: for even the Understanding it self sees but with borrowed eyes. Stars have no Native Lustre of their own: but that which sparkles in them, they derive from an higher Fountain; and so doth the Intellect. Conscience receives its Light, but at the second  
or

or third Rebound. And how impotent are the Moon - Beams , when compared with the Sun's more powerful and active Rays ? But besides this , even Reason it self , which holds the Candle , while Conscience reads , is but a poor contracted thing. *Ho-*  
*mer's* Wisdom might have been abbreviated into as narrow an Epitome as his Works : a Nut-shell would have held them both. How few are there that understand what *restatio* means ? Do not the Wisest see weakness enough

nough in themselves to make them blush ? How easily doth the next plausible Author , or able Disputant turn us from what but now we thought, a well-resolved Judgement ? Did not the Wise Philosophers bathe themselves in the dirty Puddles of Error ? *Aristotle* votes the World Eternal. *Plato* places rational Souls in fixed Stars. Heaven must be their Mansion-house ; while earthly Tabernacles are fitted for them. *Pythagoras* thwarts at once both Scripture and Reason : though that



that asserts, *The Spirits return to God that gave it*, Eccles. 12. 7. Yet this Philosopher, upon its parting with its Body, clips its Wings, and keeps it here; and rather than fail, even Bruits of the most ignoble *species*, must give it Entertainment. In his Opinion, *Aetæon's Dogs*, having eaten their Masters Body, might drink up his Soul. We must confess, (for the Word of Truth hath spoken it, *Gen. 1. 27.* compared with *Col. 3. 10.*) that the Image of an Infinite Wisdom, was once imprinted

printed upon the Soul of Man : and the Stoicks gaz'd so long upon , but the ruines of this beautiful Object , till , like *Narcissus* , they grew enamoured of their own Pictures. 'Tis true, Reason was oncè a most bright and glorious Torch : but alas ! being confined to the dull and dusky Lanthorn of humane Bodies , this Candle of the Lord, (for so the wise Man calls it) is waxen dim, and shines but weakly. And if the Window be grown so darksom , which should let in Light to direct the  
Con-

*Pro. 20. 27.*

Conscience in the ways of Equity, Truth and Peace : if Reason, which is the only Guide to its feet, and Lamp to its paths, be thus over-cast with the shades of Error, without the assistance of known Laws, it can be but an unsafe Rule in matters of Judicature.

This is the third Reason drawn from Conscience.

Conscience is a most *Reas. 4.*  
*uncertain Rule*, I mean not only *incertitudine Ob-  
jecti* ; for its flexibility hath proved that in part already ; but *incertitudi-*

D ne

*ne Subjecti* : even those who were to walk by it, could never be acquainted with it. Whence would ensue an *impossibility of obedience* ; the *dis-joynting of a Commonwealth* ; with a continued *fear and diffidency in the mindes of Subjects*. And 1. these, though innocent, would always be in a trembling posture, always in fear of the Revenger : for unless Consciences were all cast in the same mould ; those very Actions which please themselves, as being correspondent to their own Light,

Light, might incense  
their Rulers. 2. And  
since Obedience is no-  
thing else but the corre-  
spondency of Mens Beha-  
vior to the Laws of their  
Magistrates; which can-  
not be without a know-  
ledge of those Laws;  
this, where the Rule  
were so unsearchable  
and hidden a thing as  
Conscience is, would be  
impossible. Not with-  
out just cause therefore,  
hath the Prudence of all  
Ages, made *Promulgati-*  
*on, de essentiâ Legum*, this  
must *ingredi Definitio-*  
*nem*. *Suarez* and *Aqui-*  
*nas* dare not venture up-

on the *description* of a Law without it: 'tis the publication of Acts and Ordinances, which stamps upon them their commanding power. Subjects till then, are neither bound to own them, nor submit unto them. Some do thus expound *Paul's* circumcising *Timothy*, that notwithstanding this Ordinance were long before abrogated, yet was not that so publicly declared till *Paul* afterwards did it himself, *Gal.* 5. 2, 3. I want time to shew you how the Supreme Legislator hath still divulg'd

vulg'd his Will and  
Pleasure to his Subjects : Rom. 2. 14, 15.

first by the silent voice  
of Natures secret Di-  
ctates : then, by the  
louder noise of Thunder  
upon Mount *Sinai* : and  
since, in a more Gospel-  
strain, by the milder Heb. 1. 1, 2.  
Mat. 5, 6, 7  
cap. blasts of *Sion* 's Silver

Trumpets : And to what  
end was all this ? but  
that the rebellious Sons  
of *Adam* might not  
think with an *ignorantia*  
*invincibilis*, to palliate  
their Disobedience.

But 3. the uncertainty  
and variableness of this  
Rule would dis-joynt a  
Commonweal : 'twould

suddenly speak it ; yea,  
of necessity make it an  
*Heterogeneous Body* : for  
according to the indiffe-  
rent capacities of those  
Men who were to judge,  
'twould be partly Hay,  
and partly Stubble ;  
partly Gold, and partly  
Dirt. Laws were always  
esteemed the very form  
of the Politick Body ;  
and the *compositum* can-  
not be *unum quid*, where  
the *form* is *multiplex*. I  
remember an *Exercitator*  
in these *times*, hath urg'd  
this Argument against  
the erecting of Judiciary  
Courts in each County ;  
That the various Con-  
stru-



structions, which would be made in these Courts, though upon one and the same Law, must needs breed great confusion ; and in a short time make the Commonwealth strangely unlike it self. Then how much greater confusions must our Constitution beget ? in which the Laws will be as various as the Mindes of Men ; among which there is such disparity , that these words, *Quot homines, tot sententiae*, have now for some hundred yeers been thought to spell a Truth. Were

Conscience the Rule in matters of Judicature ; what commends a Man in this City , in this County , might hang him in the next : what this Magistrate enjoyns as a Duty , another , living perhaps in the same Town , whose Conscience is of a larger or more contracted size , shall forbid as a Vice : what Monsters would Cities , Kingdoms , Commonwealths be , were this project set on foot ?

This is the fourth Reason drawn from Conscience.

*Reas. 5.* Conscience is a most

*arbitrary Rule* : were a Judge confin'd to no other Bound , since this and the Will lie cloyster'd up in the same Breast, he might pretend the one, and yet be acted by the other : his private *sic volo*, *sic jubeo*, would quickly supplant it, and supply its place. Nor can any thing be more dangerous, then for the Wills of some few, though good Men, to become Laws unto all others. Did I say, their Wills? yea, their vilest Corruptions. *David's* Lust must be *Joab's* Law, and *Uriah's* Death, *2 Sam.*

11.15. The Envy of some, and the Ambition of others, would be the poor Plaintiff's *non ultra*, like the Decrees of the *Medes* and *Persians*, unalterable. And what insufferable enormities would this of necessity produce? To enthrone Conscience in the Seats of Judicature, were to put so unlimited a Power into the hands of ordinary Men, as hath always made Kingdoms and Nations to groan under it, when executed by the wisest and best of Princes. Though *Joab*, *Shimei* and *Adonijah*, died

ed justly, and their Blood  
let it rest upon their  
own Heads ; yet the  
manner of their Con-  
demnation, were enough  
to make the most inno-  
cent Subjects tremble.  
Were Conscience the  
only Rule in matters of  
Judicature, the descri-  
ption of an Heathen  
Tyrant, and Christian  
Magistrate, would be  
one and the same : this  
Motto, *Stat pro Ratione  
Voluntas*, would indiffe-  
rently serve them both.  
And have you read their  
Pressures who live in  
the Torrid Zone of the  
Turkish Empire, who  
sweat.

sweat and sigh under the weight of that Iron Scepter, which is weilded by the *Ottoman* Race, where the Sultan's Nod is enough to strangle the Greatest Persons in his Dominions? why know, that to invest Conscience with the forementioned Authority, were to place a Monarch equally absolute in each petty Jurisdiction.

This is the fifth and last Branch of the second Argument drawn from Conscience.

The

The third is taken *Arg. 3.*  
from our Judges, or the  
Managers of this unsafe  
Rule, *what they may be* :  
And although we have  
hitherto supposed them  
to be *Dauids* for Piety,  
and *Solomons* for VVif-  
dom, (and many such  
we presume this Age  
affords) yet in time they  
may be, the weakest and  
worst of Men. Any,  
who can but draw the  
specious vail of an high  
Profession over the most  
notorious Actings; any  
whom Estate or Cun-  
ning, can usher upon the  
publick Stage, & render  
conspicuous among the  
vulgar :

vulgar : yea, some perhaps, no less forlorn in Practice and Principles, then those foretold by Christ, *John* 16.2. who shall think the Blood of God's faithful Servants, a well-pleasing Sacrifice : and whether to trust these with the weilding and forging of a Civil Sword ; whether to put so sharp a Tool into such mad Mens hands, be not dangerous, let any judge.

This is the third Argument.

*Arg. 4.* The fourth is taken from *matters of Judicature, what they are* : And they



they are sometimes matters of *intricacy*, and always matters of weight.

1. They are sometimes *matters of intricacy*; and we have already demonstrated a scantness in Conscience to measure such: mens single and indigested thoughts, without the assistance of known Laws, are seldom able to dis-entangle them: for *omnis festinatio caeca est*, they are the words of *Seneca*: He cannot describe a Country, who rides Post; nor those Judges search an intricate Cause to the bot-

bottom, who make haste. And 'tis not imaginable, that our consciencious composers should dwell long upon what is brought before them, if their labours be not well rewarded: for though the novelty of such a Trust may make them Zealous for a season; yet this without Oyl will soon decay. They'll read, and quickly learn to construe so much Latine, *Propter Officium datur Beneficium*, That Pains and Profit ought to be Concomitants. And now, though the Grand Pre-  
tence

tence in the Infancy of this Constitution, must be the Subjects Ease, and the greedy Lawyers deserved Ruine; yet the event wil prove, that the fairest proportion of Justice, may be purchased by the heaviest Purse. Nor are the best of Men secured from this Temptation; for, a gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous, *Exod. 23. 8.*

But 2. they are always matters of weight. *Solomon's* Observations, touching the terrible effects of a Prince's wrath

Pro. 16. 14.  
20. 2.

wrath ; that 'tis as Messengers of Death , and his Fear like the *roaring of a Lion* ; are chiefly grounded upon this Truth : not only Men's trifling Concernments ; but whatsoever is most dear unto them , falls under the Jurisdiction of their Magistrates : and that Fence will not become our Closets, which may yet secure our Gardens : what speaks our Lumber sufficiently safe, would render our Plate and Jewels hazardous. Though it were but a pardonable over-sight, to adventure the disposal

fal of some supernumerary Enjoyments, without the Conduct of known Laws : Yet since our Estates, our Lives, our Liberties do all depend upon the *Breath* of a Judge : and (to let pass what we have spoken in the third Argument ) since the Mercies of Men are Cruelties, (for so much may be inferr'd, as the Antithesis will evince, from the Reason of *David's* choice :) I say, it be- 1 Chr. 21. 23  
ing thus ; 'twill be dangerous leaving this *Breath* arbitrary or subject to no other Check but that  
of

of Conscience, a Rule which cannot be measur'd by any other above, or without it self. But more of this in the next.

This is the fourth Argument.

*Arg. 5.* The fifth and last Argument to prove Conscience without Laws an unsafe Rule, &c. is taken from some grand Inconveniences which would follow upon this (I mean, besides those which may be rationally drawn from what we have said already) and they are among many others these three.

1. Were

I. Were the known  
Laws of a Nation can-  
cell'd, the *Jus positivum*  
laid aside, and *Conscience*  
seated in its *Room*; this  
would inevitably drive  
us to the *Judicial* or *Mo-  
ral Law*, or else to the  
*Scripture* itself, as our  
*final Umpire* in all *Con-  
tentions*; for sin being  
only the swerving from  
some received Rule,  
1 *John* 3. 4. *Rom.* 5. 13.  
these Judges, unless  
some such Rule stand  
by them, can pass no  
Judgement upon their  
own or others Actions.  
And should the Magi-  
strate regulate his Con-  
sci-

science by the Judicial Law, how unsuitable were that in many things to the present state of these Nations? Were Theft among us only punished with a restoring fourfold; how many thousands may be found, who rather than work, or want, would venture that? If by the Moral Law, without some large and voluminous Comment, (too large, I fear, to be often read) even wise Men would be unable, by its sole Direction, to determine many, yea, most Controversies.



fies. And although the VVord of God be a most Holy and Perfect Rule ; yet' the deplorable Experience of these Times , is Proof sufficient, that this also may be wrested to the indirect and collateral Aims of wicked men : How easily , how often is it abused by the Ignorance of some, and the Corruption of others ? VVere the Application of this Righteous Law *left to Conscience* , the Quakers Dreams might commence uncontrollable Edicts. Some would leave

leave their VVives, their Children, their Families ; and our Saviour's VVords, *Mat. 19. 29.* must both justifie and commend them. VVere this left to *Conscience*, *Tarquinus* his Counsel would be practiced in these Nations ; our tallest Poppies, Men of Estates and Eminency, must be cut off : *Community*, that now exploded Levelling Principle, would *resurgere è Sepulchro*, rise out of its loathsom Grave, (where long may it lie buried) and tread, what hath hitherto opposed it, under

der its feet, unless you'll  
 expunge *Acts* 2. 44.  
 which proves, that they  
 parted their Goods, and  
 had all in common.  
 Were *Conscience* once  
 commissioned, to ex-  
 pound and apply Sa-  
 cred Truths to Civil  
 Matters, how soon  
 would some enlarge the  
 Borders of this Para-  
 dox, *Dominium fundatur*  
*in Gratiâ* ? Not only  
*Power*, but *Possession*;  
 both a Right to Rule,  
 and a Right to Enjoy,  
 would be founded in  
 Grace : this dangerous  
 Tenent, *That the Godly*  
*must have all, and others*

*nothing*, would march furiously with a *Jus Divinum* proclaim'd before it ; because the Lord hath said, that *the meek shall inherit the earth* ; and *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that *all was theirs*, 1 Cor. 3. 22.

2. To appoint Conscience without the superintendency of Laws, our Rule in Matters of Judicature, would put the *Legislative* and the *Executive* Power, in one and the same hand. This is another grand Inconveniency, which the Prudence of our Ancestors hath carefully pre-

prevented, by causing these to run in different Channels. 'Tis a good Note of the Lord *Verulam's*, That Judges ought not, *Jus dare, sed, Jus dicere*: their Work is not to make, but to apply the Rule; whiles he that steers by no other Compass then his own Conscience, doth both. Which (to omit, that the Emphasis of Tyranny must needs attend it) would make Men shie and timorous, how they denounce the justest Sentence; and likewise cause much *odium* to reflect upon

E 2 them

them, from such as fall within their reach; because the Law that punishes, shall be esteem'd his that judges. We scarce ever observe, (which I speak not in disparagement of that way; so it be free, and not forced; for doubtless, 'tis a most commendable and Christian course, 1Cor. 6. 5.) I say, we seldom observe a Difference, though but in ordinary and petty matters, referred to Arbitrators; but those who undertake it, from one side or the other, shall contract ill Will, for

for doing but their Duty in it : while known Laws, standing in the room of a third Person, even he that feels the smart of these, cannot but applaud their *Rectitude*, with the *faithfulness* of his Judge, and quarrels only with the *obliquity* of his own Actions.

3. To leave *Conscience* thus independent in Judiciary Proceedings, would render the most unjust Magistrates unaccountable, since no Sentence could be so horrid and villanous, but might take Sanctu-

ary in the Bosome that pronounced it : for 'tis impossible to convict such of Irregularities, who may plead a Conformity to that Rule, which none can examine but themselves. If *John of Leyden*, the Prodigy of this last Century, will say, 'Tis his *Conscience* to have fifteen Wives at one time: to seize the Estates of all who dare not joyn with him in his wicked Projects : to convert heaps of learned and useful Volumes into a Flame : to murder his own Wife only for pity-



tying the languishing  
Inhabitants of poor  
*Munster*, the miserable  
Scene, upon which  
were acted these Abo-  
minations. And if that  
*Conscience* be his Rule:  
these Practices need no  
further Justification;  
his *ipse dixit* must stand:  
'tis not for Man to con-  
tradict it, since God a-  
lone can *try the reins*, Jer.  
17.10.

These are the three  
grand *Inconveni-  
ences*, and our  
fifth or last Ar-  
gument.

The Doctrine thus  
E 4 con-

confirmed, will afford us these following Uses: *viz.* *A Word* 1. of *Exhortation*; 2. of *Caution*; 3. of *Encouragement*; 4. of *Humiliation*; 5. of *Instruction*.

*Use 1.* Are the Consciences of Wise Men an unsafe Rule? Then hence let me speak one Word to those Honourable and Learned Persons, whom Providence hath appointed to sit in Judgment in this Place, and at this Time. And, my Lords, let this Text and Doctrine, perswade you to stick close to those  
Laws

Laws by which you are govern'd your selves, and ought to judge others. That Magistrate is not fit to act, who is so shackled with the scrupulosities of his private *Conscience*, or rather over-weening *Fancy*, as not to keep pace with the Rule he is sworn to walk by. We doubt not, (and let his Name be praised for it) but the Lord hath, in a high measure, bestowed upon you *Solomon's* Portion, even wise and understanding Hearts. And if Laws were only the free Ebullitions of

Reason, there were some Pretence why *that* Wisdom without *these*, might be your Guide : But your Lordships know, That the *Jus Proprium* in most Nations, is little other then the Product of Experience and Necessity : for *ex malis Moribus fiunt bonæ Leges*. And those that chase the Wilde Boar, must not think to make their pursuit in a straight Line (though that were more beautiful and commodious) but must follow as they are led. Even so our Law-givers in all Ages,  
(be-

(being to pursue the Vicious Humors of Unreasonable Men, through their untoward Mazes , and wilde Mæanders) did sometimes step out of the Paths of Reason , 'cause what they followed was Irrational. Hence 'tis that Laws differ as much as Climates; what one Country explodes, the other applauds ; while Reason is the same in all Places. That's the first Branch of this Use, Let your own private Reason strike Sail to known Laws.

Sc-

Secondly, As Judges may not relie upon their own Understandings ; so neither listen to the Pleadings of their own Affections : for the Judge himself is condemn-  
*ed, when the Guilty is acquitted.* As Prejudice must not perswade your Lordships to torture Laws ; so neither Pity to gagge them. These are the *Sylla* and *Charibdis*, the two Rocks your Lordships ought carefully to avoid : for *he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord,*

Lord, Prov. 17. 15. And wonder not at this, since *Lenitas erga malos est crudelitas erga bonos*; when the Wicked are pardoned, the Righteous are punished.

If any object, That *Object.* Mercy and Justice interwoven, is that Robe which best becomes a Judge; and that Magistrates, being called gods, ought to imitate the Lord in that, even as in other Attributes:

We answer by grant- *Answ.*  
ing the Allegation, but with this Difference,  
That God hath *mercy*  
upon

*upon whom he will have mercy ; but they , upon whom they ought : for though it be his Glory to conceal a thing, yet is it their honour to search out a matter , Prov. 25.*

2.

*This is the first Use,  
A Word of Exhortation.*

*Is our Doctrine a*  
*Use 2.* *Truth ? Then take heed of being again decoy'd into the least Approbation of these, or the like Destructive Principles : That Commonwealths may be governed without the known Laws :  
That*



That consciencious Men,  
without the guidance and  
superintendency of these,  
can steer a State. Recol-  
lect what hath been al-  
ledg'd, concerning the  
impossibility of this.  
What though thou art  
thy self rais'd above  
that Oppression and  
Mischief which would  
ensue upon it? yet re-  
member, thy poer  
Neighbours are not, and  
thy Children may not  
be. There are some,  
who (like that traitorous  
Underminer of his Fa-  
ther's Kingdom, 2 Sam.  
15.) do stand in the  
Gate, wishing that  
they

they were Judges in the Land ; and that Men might bring their Suits to them, for they would do them Justice. But know , that there is much difference between *Alsolom* on Foot, and *Alsolom* on Horseback ; he kisses in one posture, but kills in the other : He that's courteous in the Stirrup, is churlish in the Saddle. The Hedghog is no sooner entertained in the Fox's Den ; but he sets up his prickles, and tells his Host, If he like it not, he may leave him there. Could the  
grand

grand and primary Projectors of this reformed Model, have accomplished their Ends, though they seemed before to want Fingers, yet would they then have found Claws. 'Tis dangerous tasting Poyson, though wrapp'd up in Sugar. And this Design of Extirpating Laws, and Enthroning a pretended Conscience in their room, was too loathsome to be otherwise swallowed; too deformed to appear without a veil: for if the Wolf will enter the fold with

with the Sheep's consent, he must wear their Livery.

*Object.* Do any object, That this Discourse and Caution are both out of season?

*Answer.* My Answer is, That I could wish them more out of season, then I fear they are: for that Physician must love his Profit too well, who is quarrelsome because his Neighbours are not sick. Besides, though God hath blown this Cloud from off Men's Understandings at present; yet how soon its scattered parts may reunite,

unite, and a second time over-spread us, we do not know.

This is the second  
Use, *A Word of  
Caution.*

Is the superintendency of Laws so requisite, &c. Then let *use 3.* this encourage Magistrates, both in their *Work*, and in their *Way*. In their *Work*: For this Doctrine speaks it highly necessary. We cannot live; our Commonwealth cannot stand: but without it, sinks under its own unweildy Bulk. And because,

cause to have no Rules  
and having one, to want  
Knowledge how to use  
it, is the same thing;  
This Doctrine doth  
commend their *Way* too :  
for our *Magistrates* are  
acquainted with this  
Rule ; they are vers'd  
in the known Laws of  
these Nations, with-  
out which, *Justice*  
would be defective, e-  
ven lame as well as  
blinde ; and *Conscience*  
but a feeble Reed, sha-  
ken with the Winde  
of every passion : Law  
is the Compass, by  
which our *Magistrates*  
direct their Course ;  
and

and the want onely of  
this Pilot, made *Da-*  
*vid's* Judgement so Op-  
pressive, his Sentence so  
Injurious.

This is the third  
Use, *A Word of*  
*Encouragement.*

Is Conscience with-  
out Laws, &c. Then *use 4.*  
let this humble the  
wisest and best of Men,  
while our Doctrine dis-  
plays before them their  
own Frailties. Let  
them blush to see what  
poor contracted things  
they are ; how easily  
turn'd aside with every  
slandrous Breath ; how  
un-

unable to judge, even the smallest matters.

Nor may any object, what some have said concerning Nature's Law, (from which *σωτηρις*, or primary act of Conscience, differs onely *ratione*) that this Law is the clearest Light, the best Guide; for I have heard that already: and that those who act according to its Dictates cannot erre; for I have heard that too. I have read these and other the like Encomiums of Nature: *Idem beatè vivere & secundum Naturam, ad illius*



*illius Legem Exemplumque  
formari sapientia est.* But  
pray who was it that  
thus commended Na-  
ture, but some con-  
ceited Stoick ; some  
purblind Heathens, who  
had lost their eyes with  
doating so fondly upon  
so foul a Mistris ? Doth  
not Scripture teach us,  
that *Nature* is bruitish,  
blinde and dark ? Doth  
not Experience teach us,  
that *Conscience* is turn'd  
an *Ignis fatuus*, and leads  
us into the paths of Er-  
ror ? 'Twas once in-  
deed a Star of the first  
Magnitude a bright  
and shining Taper : But  
alas !

alas ! how is it now depraved ? how surrounded with smok and blackness ? It receives its Light onely from an eclipsed Sun, from a beclouded Intellect ; and that Moon which doth so, will shine but feebly.

This is the fourth  
Use, *A Word of  
Humiliation.*

If the Consciences of  
wise and good Men  
be so unsafe a Rule, &c.

*use 5.* Then,

I. Hence we may  
learn, what pitiful  
work would wicked  
Men

Men and Fools have  
made ? what lament-  
able Stories would a  
little Experience have  
told of such ? How  
many Innocents must  
have groaned under the  
Pressure of their Ri-  
diculous and Unjust  
Decrees ? If a Sen-  
tence so Unreasonable,  
(as this in our Text )  
drop from *David's*  
Mouth, what may we  
expect from *Saul's* ?  
*Ziba* so far prevail'd  
with the Former, as  
to rob one Man of  
his Estate ; but *Doeg*  
so far with the Latter,  
as to bereave some  
F Hun-

Hundreds of their  
Lives : Fourscore and  
five of the Lord's  
Priests may dye their  
Ephods in their own  
Blood, *1 Sam. 22.* He  
chose the better part,  
who desired, rather to  
Live under the most  
cruel Tyrant that a-  
cted by a Declared  
Rule, then under the  
best Prince without it.  
And if the Holiest Men  
in these Nations, with-  
out the Guidance of  
known Laws, be un-  
capable of so great a  
Trust ; Then, doubt-  
less for the Consciences  
of Malicious Selfish  
Hy-

Hypocrites to be made the Standards of Right and Wrong, had been most sad, and dangerous.

2. *Hence we may learn*, to look back, with silent Admirati-  
on, upon that despe-  
rate Rock we have e-  
scaped; to review that  
Unavoidable Ruine,  
which so lately threat-  
ned us, with a thank-  
ful Astonishment. 'Tis  
not long since we saw  
some seated in the room  
of the Judge, who nei-  
ther knew the Laws, nor  
pretended to act by  
them. 'Tis not long  
F 2 since

since Wise Men in a Distracted Posture, stood gazing upon each other, listning diligently what horrible Desolations their misguided Zeal would give Birth unto, whose Grand Consultations were, how to rase the Foundation of this Commonwealth, and Extirpate its Laws. Hath that Eye which neither slumbers nor sleeps prevented this? Break forth into praises for so great, so undeserved a Mercy.

3. *Hence we may learn,  
To bless the Lord for that  
eminent*

eminent Assistance and Direction he graciously vouchsafed his Servants lately assembled in Parliament : To *bleſs the Lord* for giving them Courage and Resolution to aſſert the known Laws of theſe Nations, the ſtanding Rule by which they muſt be govern'd : To *bleſs the Lord* for putting into their hands that *Ariadne's* Thread, which hath been their Conduct to ſo hopeful a Settlement, through the thick Darkneſs of former and late Confuſions : Yea, To *bleſs the Lord* that our

Supreme Magistrate is now a second time engaged by Oath to Manage his Great and Weighty Trust, according to the Laws of this Commonwealth : And that in so good a Measure God hath restored our Judges as at the first, and our Counsellors as at the beginning.

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**FINIS.**

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